

**Assembly Joint Resolution**

**No. 37**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Bonta**

April 21, 2016

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 37—Relative to Filipino veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 37, as introduced, Bonta. Filipino veterans.

This measure would request that the Congress of the United States award the Congressional Gold Medal to Filipino veterans of World War II in recognition of their loyal and selfless duty to the Philippines and to the United States.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The Legislature has always properly recognized
- 2 the service and sacrifice of all veterans and, in August 2011, passed
- 3 Assembly Bill 199 to encourage the inclusion of the role of
- 4 Filipinos during World War II in the social sciences curriculum
- 5 for grades 7 to 12, inclusive, in California; and
- 6 WHEREAS, On July 26, 1941, the United States Army Forces
- 7 in the Far East (USAFPE) was created by a military order by the
- 8 United States War Department and signed by President Franklin
- 9 D. Roosevelt, which federalized all military units in the United
- 10 States Commonwealth of the Philippines into the service of the
- 11 United States Army under the command of General Douglas
- 12 MacArthur; and
- 13 WHEREAS, On December 8, 1941, just six hours after the
- 14 bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Philippines was invaded by Japan.
- 15 On December 24, 1941, in accordance with War Plan Orange 3

1 (WPO3), the USAFFE made a strategic retreat to the Bataan  
2 Peninsula which guarded the entrance of Manila Bay. Filipino  
3 soldiers of the USAFFE made up seven-eighths of the main line  
4 of resistance in the Battle of Bataan. Despite the lack of training  
5 and equipment and fighting without any air support, the Filipino  
6 and American soldiers of the USAFFE fought with great distinction  
7 and inflicted heavy losses on the Japanese Army in the Battle of  
8 Abucay, Battle of the Points, and Battle of the Pockets in January  
9 and February 1942. Because of the Europe First Policy, the  
10 USAFFE troops were unable to receive necessary reinforcement,  
11 which led to massive disease and starvation. However, they  
12 performed a delaying action that disrupted the timetable of the  
13 Japanese Army of 52 days, defending the Bataan peninsula for 99  
14 days; and

15 WHEREAS, On April 9, 1942, General Edward P. King, Jr.,  
16 Commanding General of the Luzon Forces, was forced to surrender  
17 75,000 USAFFE troops consisting of 63,000 Filipino and 12,000  
18 American soldiers, mostly suffering from disease and starvation.  
19 Those soldiers were forced to march some 60 miles to their prison  
20 camp at Camp O'Donnell in searing heat with barely any provisions  
21 for food, water, shelter, or medicine. Those who could no longer  
22 go on were beaten, bayoneted, shot, and some even beheaded by  
23 their captors. Approximately 10,000 Filipino and 750 American  
24 soldiers died along the way in what became known as the Bataan  
25 Death March. Once inside Camp O'Donnell, another 20,000  
26 Filipino and 1,600 American soldiers died. On May 6, 1942, Lt.  
27 General Jonathan Wainwright, Commanding General of the United  
28 States Forces in the Philippines, surrendered Corregidor and the  
29 rest of the Philippines to General Masaharu Homma of the Japanese  
30 Army; and

31 WHEREAS, From 1942 until 1945, Filipinos made up a majority  
32 of the Guerrilla groups which laid the groundwork for the eventual  
33 liberation of the Philippines which started on October 1944 with  
34 the Leyte Landing and the Battle of Leyte Gulf and ended on  
35 September 3, 1945, with the surrender of General Tomoyuki  
36 Yamashita of the Japanese Army to the Allied Forces; and

37 WHEREAS, The Philippine nation suffered heavy casualties  
38 from December 8, 1941, until September 3, 1945. Beginning in  
39 1944, a systematic extermination of civilians (Zonas) and prisoners  
40 of war took place all over the Philippines. During the Battle of

Manila between February and March 1945, approximately 100,000 civilians perished in Manila, many by massacres. By the end of the war, approximately 1,000,000 civilians had perished in the Philippines and Manila, once called the Pearl of the Orient, became the second most devastated city during World War II after Warsaw, Poland; and

WHEREAS, The men and women of the Philippines and United States performed an invaluable service in defense of the United States and Philippines from July 26, 1941, to December 31, 1946. In the Philippines it consisted of the Philippine Scouts (part of the Philippine Department), the Philippine Commonwealth Army, Recognized Guerrillas, and the New Philippine Scouts. In the United States, the First Filipino Infantry Regiment, 2nd Filipino Infantry Battalion (Separate), and First Reconnaissance Battalion were activated between July and October 1942, in California; and

WHEREAS, In February and May 1946, a great injustice was inflicted on the Filipino soldiers with the passage of the First and Second Surplus Rescission Acts, which deemed the service of the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines including organized guerrilla forces, while such forces were in the service of the United States Armed Forces pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, as not to have been active military, naval, or air service for the purposes of any law of the United States conferring rights, privileges, or benefits upon any person by reason of the service of such person or the service of any other person in the United States Armed Forces; now, therefore be it

*Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly,* That the California Legislature requests that the Congress of the United States award the Congressional Gold Medal to Filipino veterans of World War II in recognition of their loyal and selfless duty to the Philippines and to the United States; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative

- 1 from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the
- 2 author for appropriate distribution.

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